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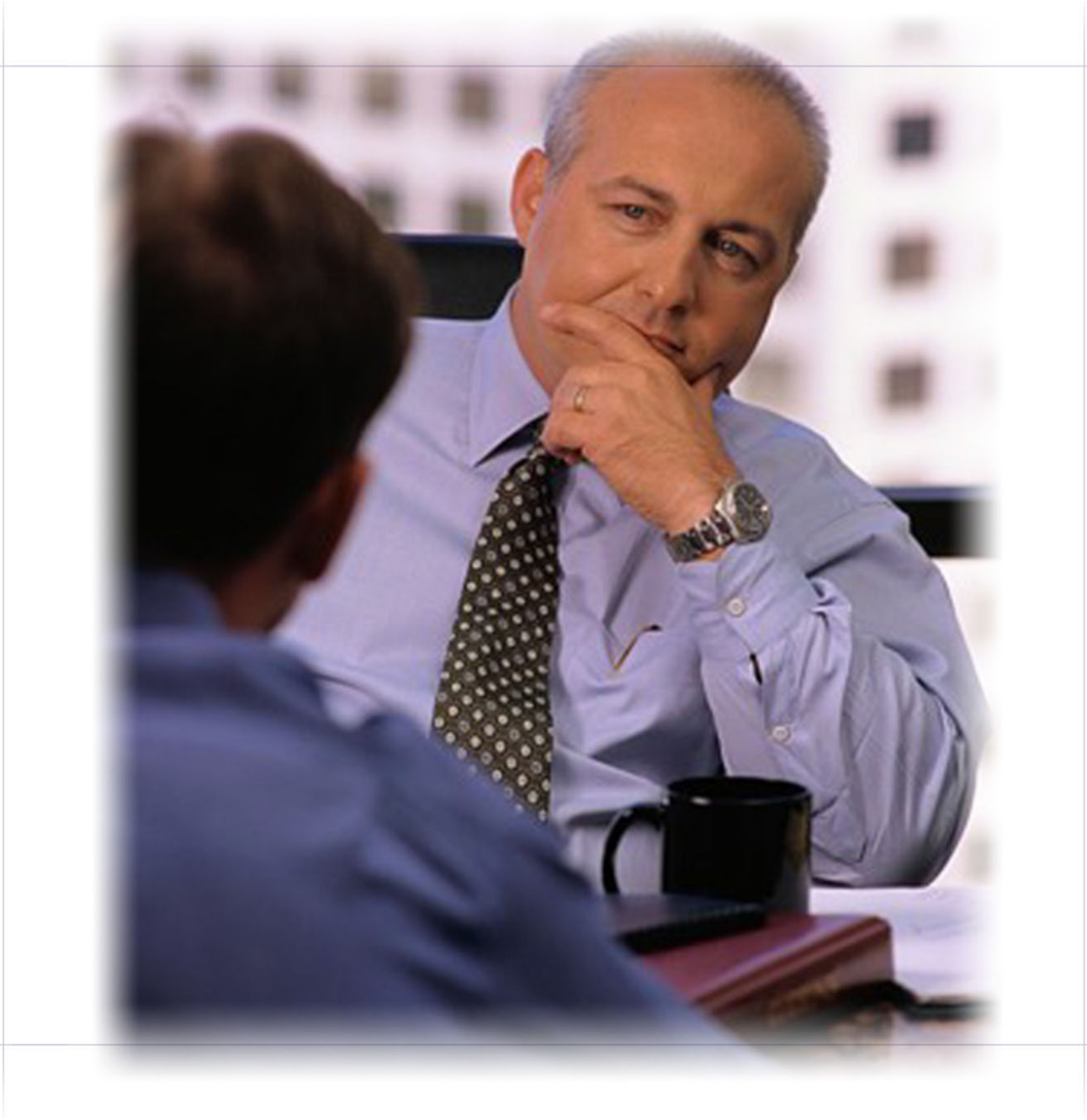

The IdeaBridge White Paper Series:
The Leadership Series:
People Skills

THE LEADERSHIP SERIES: PEOPLE SKILLS

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Summary

As part of our ongoing series on Leadership Essentials, we present some time-honored truisms about the necessity for People Skills. World economies have changed markedly from the old command-and-control military style of Leadership. It's not enough anymore to be named the Leader; one must be anointed and accepted as the Leader by the people they lead. This takes strong people skills in addition to by-the-book Leadership.

- Leaders are open enough so that everyone around them can get to know and trust them. Leaders are also approachable. True Leaders are recognized as warm and likable people. How do you stack up in this area?

- Leaders must develop a deep understanding of the collective yearnings. They pick-up on the subtle clues, the quiet whisperings, the facial expressions and voice tones. They get a sense about what people want, value, need and dream about.

- Have a genuine concern for those whom you lead. People look for their Leader to safeguard their future.

- The reason behind holding a recreational outing is to let your team rest and recuperate from the demands your leadership places upon them. When was the last time you took your team offsite for some fun? And remember, you must take the entire team, not just your favorites!

- Look for ways to relieve stress in those around you. Leaders always ask how they can help. Leaders don't wait to be asked...they readily volunteer.

- When you believe in people, you motivate them and release their potential; people can sense intuitively when a person really believes in them.

- Praise a person every time you see improvement.

- People will continue working, struggling and trying if they have hope. Hope lifts morale. It improves self-image. It reenergizes people. It raises their expectations. It is the Leader's job to hold hope high, to instill it in the people he leads.

- To build relationships, begin by listening to people's life story, their journey so far. Your genuine interest in them will mean a lot to them. It will also help you to know their personal strengths and weaknesses. Ask them about their goals and what motivates them.

- Napoleon Bonaparte is known as one of history's greatest Leaders. One of his leadership secrets was knowing the needs of his men. He first determined what his men wanted most. Then he did everything to help them get it; he knew this was a key to successful motivation. Napoleon often commented how amazed he was to learn that men would gladly risk their lives in pursuit of a simple ribbon or medal.

- Outstanding Leaders do not hold grudges.

- A good Leader must be motivating, rewarding and create a nourishing environment; he must never appear aloof, distant or disinterested.

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- Employees must feel comfortable about coming to you to ask questions, get advice and occasionally just get your opinions on their future with the company.
- Be friendly and approachable. Make people feel safe to express their opinions to you.
- Keep all interviews low key, fun and upbeat; don't run them like interrogation sessions. It should be a free flow of information, a two-way conversation.
- Be curious. Do not conduct interviews as interrogation sessions. Get to know people, their family and interests and hobbies. This will help you develop better rapport.
- When having discussions in their offices, Leaders should not sit behind their desks. Instead, they should go to a chair or a sofa, thus avoiding an imposing position that is often intimidating to associates. Visitors are more comfortable, and therefore more candid, when Leaders sit in the more sociable areas of their offices.

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